

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3397

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN

SUBJECT: REQUIREMENTS FOR LEBANESE VISAS

1. THE EMBASSY HAS LEARNED OF A NEW LEBANESE REGULATION CONCERNING VISAS FOR LEBANON. ACCORDING TO THE LEBANESE CHARGE THE NEW REGULATION,

WHICH HAS BEEN IN EFFECT NEARLY TWO WEEKS, REQUIRES THAT ANYONE WHO WISHES A VISA MUST PROVIDE A THIRD PERSON NOTE FROM THE APPLICANTS OWN EMBASSY VERIFYING THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE PASSPORT OR ELSE WAIT APPROXIMATELY ONE MONTH WHILE THE LOCAL LEBANESE EMBASSY OBTAINS CLEARANCE FROM BEIRUT. INDIVIDUALS WHO BEAR PASSPORTS WHICH WERE ISSUED BY THE U.S. EMBASSY IN THE COUNTRY IN WHICH THEY ARE APPLYING FOR A VISA MAY OBTAIN SAME WITHOUT FURTHER CLEARANCE OF SUBMISSION OF EMBASSY NOTE. OUR BRITISH COLLEGUES HAVE INFORMED US THAT THEY ARE FACING THE SAME PROBLEM AND THE LEBANESE CHARGE MADE A POINT OF EMPHASIZING THAT THE REGULATION APPLIES TO PERSONS OF ALL NATIONALITIES EXCEPT CITIZENS OF ARAB COUNTRIES WHO DO NOT NEED VISAS TO TRAVEL TO LEBANON. HE SAID HE BELIEVES THE REGULATION APPLIES WORLDWIDE.

2. BY WAY OF EXPLANATION THE LEBANESE CHARGE STATED THAT SINCE THERE IS VERY LITTLE CONTROL OF VISITORS ONCE THEY HAVE ENTERED LEBANON THE NEW REGULATION IS DESIGNED TO EXCLUDE UNDESIREABLES FROM

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ENTERING ON FORGED PASSPORTS. WE HAVE HEARD THAT THE RECENT

ATTACKS ON PLO BUILDINGS IN BEIRUT CARRIED OUT BY PERSONS USING FORGED PASSPORTS WERE THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF THE NEW REGULATION.

3. ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS THE DEPARTMENT OR BEIRUT MAY HAVE WOULD BE WELCOME. IF EMBASSY BEIRUT VERIFIES ACCURACY OF ABOVE INFO, DEPT MAY WISH TO CIRCULATE THE INFORMATION ABOVE TO AREA POSTS AND URGE, WHERE POSSIBLE, THAT U.S. CITIZENS OBTAIN LEBANESE VISAS IN THE COUNTRY IN WHICH THEIR PASSPORT WAS ISSUED. SINCE LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF AMERICANS TRAVEL TO LEBANON FROM JORDAN EVERY YEAR, SUPPLY MANY OF THEM WITH THE NECESSARY PASSPORT VERIFICATION WILL BE A CONSIDERABLE BURDEN ON THE CONSULAR SECTION. LEBANON HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN A COUNTRY OF EASY ACCESS AND WE SUSPECT THAT MANY AMERICANS TRAVELLING IN THE AREA WILL EXPECT TO OBTAIN VISAS FROM ONE OF THE SURROUNDING ARAB COUNTRIES WITH LITTLE OR NO DELAY (WE HAVE ALREADY HAD SEVERAL REQUESTS FOR NOTES). IN CONNECTION WITH THIS WOULD LIKE TO KNOW FROM EMBASSY BEIRUT IF IT IS STILL POSSIBLE FOR U.S. CITIZENS TO OBTAIN VISAS ON ARRIVAL AT THE BEIRUT AIRPORT OR OTHER PORTS OF ENTRY.
SUDDARTH

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